

Fairmount Providers . . .



It all started with a neighborhood fall block party 15 years ago. The goal was to offer a one-time event to meet neighbors, learn what is going on in the community, and get information about events and services in the Fairmount area. There was free food, door prizes, music, and a neighborly spirit. It was a great day—so great in fact, that attendees wanted to build on relationships made then. The result was the Fairmount Providers’ group that has met nine months a year ever since to network and collaborate on community projects. Though an average of 20 people attend the monthly meetings more than

120 are on the email list and receive summaries of meetings and updates on activities and needs.

Members have come to know each other so well that at meetings if someone says, “I need help with...” a hand goes up in the room— “I can do that.” One of our annual collaborations is providing treats for Lisa Hyde-Miller’s annual career costume party in October at the Villages at Roll Hill community center. Instead of dressing as ghosts and superheroes for Halloween, youth research a career—education needed, likely opportunity, and potential salary—dress as one would in that career and explain their findings to the other party-goers.

Childhood Food Solutions, a separate non-profit that addresses childhood food insecurity was born from a meeting about hunger and lack of access to healthy food and high infant mortality rates in the neighborhood.

The National Day of Prayer caravan of prayer throughout the community is an annual event initiated by providers. Participants drive and follow each other to 12 locations in the community praying for God’s blessings there and inviting people at those sites to join us in prayer. Stops have included schools, addiction recovery centers, clinics, recreation centers, Police headquarters and St. Leo’s prayer wall.

We’ve had police chiefs, city managers, college professors, community organizers, innovators, and elected officials come and meet with us. We’ve attended community development trainings. We’ve worked together on health fairs and programs for youth. We’ve connected each other to Big Brother programs, grants, and other resources. We cheered when the Millvale Rec Center received a Cincinnati Reds’ grant for a make over.

Members and agencies have come and gone over the years but each has left a lasting mark. We’ve prayed together, we’ve worked together, we’ve eaten together. We’ve also grieved together when one of our members, Kelly Kerr, died of cancer.

The group keeps evolving and changing yet there is still the spark of excitement when we gather...“I’ve got an idea...” “I can help. Let’s get started.”